

# Texas track takes toll on most military teams

**Lt. Col. William Thurmond**  
*Army News Service*

**FORT WORTH, Texas** — The Texas Motor Speedway celebrated its 10th birthday this week-end with the running of the Samsung/Radio Shack 500. Unfortunately, most of the military-sponsored entries failed to receive invitations.

The notable exception was veteran Ken Schrader's Motorcraft/U.S. Air Force Ford, which

finished on the lead lap in 16th place after starting in 32nd.

The race winner, Kasey Kahne, started on the pole and was rarely out of the top 10 all afternoon. He was followed across the stripe by Matt Kenseth, whose second place boosted him to second in Nextel Cup championship points.

Finishing third was current Nextel Cup champion Tony Stewart, who led the most laps but was unable to test the strength of the front-stretch

fencing due to Kahne's dominating five-second margin of victory.

Rookie Denny Hamlin rounded-out the top four with a strong showing and career-best finish.

After leading the early part of the race and lapping over half of the field, Greg Biffle's number 16 National Guard/Subway Ford was the second car out of the event following backstretch contact with former champion Kurt Busch's lap-down Dodge.

Biffle's crash brought out a race-stopping red flag as Texas Motor Speedway crews went to work repairing damage to the track's safety barrier, giving fans an unscheduled 24-minute refreshment break 125 miles into the 500-mile event.

Joe Nemechek suffered through an agonizing weekend, crashing his primary racecar on the first lap of practice Friday. Although he qualified 17th-

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## Splash Down!



File photo

*The Corkan Swimming Pool's waterslide is a major draw for crowds, especially during the summer. The pool re-opens in May.*

# Corkan offers year-round adventure, fun

**Pat Young**  
*Frontline Staff*

A summer wonderland of adventure is open weekends for Soldiers and their family members at Corkan Recreation Complex on Fort Stewart.

"The complex offers affordable family fun," said Roni Stevens, Outdoor Recreation and Corkan Family Business Manager. The complex offers a variety of activities including bowling, skating, mini-golf and re-opening in May, the Springs Water Park.

A 12-lane bowling alley is featured at Stewart Lanes, as well as a snack bar, two

party rooms and an amusement area. Shoes rent for fifty cents a pair and lanes are \$2 a game.

If you get the need for speed, you can turn in your bowling shoes for skates. You can rent them at Corkan Gym for \$1 or bring your own.

If a slower pace is more your style, you can amble around the extensive 18-hole-adventure mini-golf course for only \$2 while challenging your short game with ramp and water obstacles.

The mini-golf course isn't the only facility in the Corkan Complex that provides aquatic amusement.

"Coming in May, the Springs Water Park opens to children 12 and under," Stevens said. "Admission is only \$1 – and children 3 and under enter free with a paying adult."

The complex is located in Bldg. 450, next to Corkan Swimming Pool, across from the Post exchange. The hours of operation are 6 – 10 p.m. Friday, 1 – 10 p.m. Saturday and 1 – 9 p.m. Sunday.

Corkan now offers a \$25 Family Pass which includes 15 admissions to bowling, skating, mini-golf, water park or the new indoor playground.

The playground is a state-of-the-art obstacle course with ball blasters, slides and a tod-

dlers play area. The pass does not include rental items.

"This is a great place to do an organizational day," Stevens said. "You can schedule it for parties after hours by appointment."

Parties cost \$5.75 per person and include a hot dog, chips, a drink and one hour of bowling, skating or miniature golf.

Party packs can be upgraded for \$6.50 per person. Upgraded party packs include pizza, drinks and one hour of bowling, skating or mini-golf.

For more information about Corkan Recreation Complex, call Roni Stevens at 767-4273.

# Army Women's Basketball coach Dixon dies suddenly

**Army News Service**

**WEST POINT, N.Y.** — Army Women's Basketball Coach Maggie Dixon, 28, died April 6 at Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla, N.Y.

Coach Dixon collapsed Wednesday during an afternoon tea and was taken immediately to Keller Army Community Hospital. She was then airlifted to Westchester.

West Point superintendent, Lt. Gen. William J. Lennox Jr., said the entire community is heartbroken by her death.

"From the time Maggie arrived here, her enthusiastic 'no limits' approach earned her the respect and love of everyone," he said. "She consistently displayed great leadership and served as an outstanding role model for those both on and off her team. She was a leader of character with a commitment to excellence who set the example in all she did."

"Her joy in coaching these young women made them believe in themselves and depend on each other," said Army Athletic Director Kevin Anderson. "Her guidance not only helped them excel here, it will help them become better, more compassionate leaders."

That sentiment was echoed by one of the Army's star basketball players, guard Cara Enright.

"I just loved the energy that coach brought to practice every day and the way she never

gave up on us, always believed in us," Enright said. "She would tell us to 'use what you've learned here at the academy and apply it to basketball.'

"Coach Dixon made us love the game even more and we played our hearts out every single time we stepped on the court," Enright added. "She showed us how to be winners on the field and off."

And that winning legacy will always be remembered, Lennox said. "Maggie has been a credit to herself and to the mission of the U.S. Military Academy. Her presence here enriched the lives of everyone," he added. "I will never forget the image of the cadets carrying her on their shoulders as they celebrated the team's Patriot League championship."

"Our thoughts and prayers are with her family and we will be forever grateful for all she has given us, both on the playing field and off," Lennox said.

Dixon arrived just 11 days before the start of the season and took over as coach of the Army women's basketball team. She guided them to their first Patriot League regular season and tournament titles, earning West Point its first trip to the NCAA tournament at the Division I level in 2006.

Dixon became the Black Knights' seventh head coach in the history of intercollegiate women's basketball history at West Point after serving five years as an assistant coach at DePaul University.



U.S. Army photo

**Army Women's Basketball Coach Maggie Dixon died April 6. She guided the team to its first Patriot League regular season and tournament titles, earning West Point its first trip to the NCAA tournament at the Division I level.**



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## Soccer team ensures Iraqi children have a ball

**Samantha L. Quigley**  
*American Forces Press Service*

**PHILADELPHIA** – Philadelphia's indoor soccer team kicked its support for U.S. servicemembers into high gear last night when it announced its partnership with the "America Supports You" program.

"We're glad to help the military," said Jeffrey B. Rotwitt, owner of the KiXX, a Major Indoor Soccer League team.

America Supports You is a nationwide Defense Department program that helps showcase Americans' support for the men and women of the armed forces.

The KiXX project began when a 7-year-old heard his uncle, serving in Iraq, tell about the conditions in the country, Rotwitt said. The uncle said the youth of Iraq love soccer, but because of conditions in the country, soccer balls are scarce.

"(The boy asked if,) since I owned a soccer team, could I help the balls get to the youth of Iraq?" he said. "We decided we would give to everybody who came and brought a soccer ball a free ticket for another game."

The result of Operation Soccer Ball was more than 1,000 soccer balls donated for Iraq's youth.

"This is a wonderful idea, and we are so grateful to the KiXX for what they are doing for the Iraqi children," said Allison Barber, deputy assistant secretary of defense for public affairs. "Every day we see our troops finding ways to do something special for the children in Iraq, and this is an important contribution to that effort."

America Supports You connects organizations like the KiXX and its fans to the nation's servicemembers, who in turn show their care and concern for Iraq's children, she said.

Utah Army National Guard Chief Warrant Officer Paul Holton saw firsthand during his 14 months in Iraq the importance of these bridge-building efforts. He said events like the KiXX-sponsored soccer ball donation are key to getting the American public involved.

"It not only gets people to support the troops, but it's good for people to get involved with something positive, to do something to help the soldiers," he said. "It helps the soldiers who build bridges ... to kind of bridge over misunderstandings and hatred and reach out and touch the people and let them know we care about them."

Holton's organization, "Operation Give," also an America Supports You team member, will help get the soccer balls to the young players, he said. The balls will be consolidated, packed in boxes and shipped to Operation Give's warehouse in Salt Lake City, Utah.

"We're ... going to actually get FedEx to pick them up from Salt Lake City and get them airlifted, shipped to Baghdad," he said.

In Baghdad, military and Iraqi civilian members of Operation Give will handle the soccer ball distribution and keep building bridges, Holton said.

Jessica Hallowell's donation will be among those shipped to Iraq. The 10-year-old Mertztown, Pa., resident said she hopes Iraqi children will have fun playing soccer, a game she loves.

"It's not like they have to win," she said. "It's just about having fun."

Bob Daniels, who had a hand in planning the event, said efforts like Operation Soccer Ball are crucial and he hopes it goes league-wide next season. Daniels is chairman of the Ben Franklin Global Forum, an education and outreach program.

"If it just saves the life of one or two of our troops, while at the same time giving the children of Iraq an understanding that the people in this country care about them and wish them success, then we're building the right kind of bridges," he said.







Lt. Col. William Thurmond

*A mechanic runs around Joe Nemechek's Army Chevrolet car during a pit stop at Texas Motor Speedway Sunday.*

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quickest, that run was the high-water mark for the Army team, who chased tight conditions through a staggering variety of chassis and tire pressure adjustments in an effort to loosen up the car.

"It's not the ideal situation when you can't use the best stuff you bring to the track," Nemechek said following Sunday's race. "We just never found a comfort zone with the backup Army Chevrolet."

"We were good Soldiers again — never quitting," Nemechek said. "But we have to get this thing figured out and start the race with better handling. I have all of the confidence with our Army team that we'll get it going in the right direction."

Nemechek remained 25th in the driver point standings, one position better than where he was last year at this time.

While victory lane has been a stranger to Front Row Joe and the Army team, no one can find fault with their work ethic. Like the Soldiers they proudly represent, quitting just isn't an option.

Leaving Texas, Nemechek maintains the longest active streak of finishing races. Starting at Bristol (Tenn.) in March 2005, he's been running at the finish in 39 consecutive races.

"I feel the streak says plenty about the group of people I work with," Nemechek said. "In the past year, we've had some banged-up cars, but if the damage is salvageable, you know we'll get it temporarily fixed and be back on the track."

The Nextel Cup Series has Easter Weekend off. The action will resume the following week at Phoenix International Raceway, where Nemechek and his fellow drivers will take part in special Military Appreciation festivities planned by the track and NASCAR.

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# USA B-ball scores with America Supports You

**Paul X. Rutz**  
American Forces Press Service

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — Servicemembers' children had a chance to shoot hoops with some of the nation's top basketball stars at the Pentagon Athletic Center recently.

USA Basketball, the governing body for U.S. men's and women's basketball, came to the Pentagon to join the "America Supports You" program today. The hoops organization committed to a three-year effort to actively support the nation's troops, including basketball clinics by star coaches and players for servicemembers and their children.

"USA Basketball has had a long association with the United States armed forces, and we are very proud to expand this relationship through the 'Hoops for Troops' program," Navy Adm. Edmund P. Giambastiani Jr., vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said at a press conference.

"Through this program, military members and their families will be able to attend selected USA men's and women's basketball senior national team practices and exhibition games," he said. "In addition, senior national teams will make visits and host clinics, like the one here, for servicemembers and their families."

America Supports You showcases Americans' support for servicemembers and their families. Giambastiani noted that more than 200 grassroots organizations and more than 20 corporate sponsors have joined the program since its launch in November 2004.

Coaches and team executives had met earlier with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and other senior Pentagon officials to celebrate the USAB-ASY collaboration.

"The ultimate goal for (USA Basketball) is not just to win a gold medal," said national team coach Mike Krzyzewski, a 1969 West Point graduate and former Army officer. "The ultimate goal for us is to serve this country with the dignity it deserves and the class it deserves, and to serve as an example for others as to how to do it."

"That's basically what our military is doing in harm's way," the Duke University basketball coach noted, "and we appreciate that. Hopefully we will be able to do that on the basketball court."

Krzyzewski mentioned his son-in-law, who left for Baghdad recently to finish the last five months of his yearlong tour there. "It makes me feel good to see him and his belief in a cause and his enthusiasm to serve," he said.

After the press conference, players and coaches held a one-hour clinic with 45 eager children, ages 8 to 12, the sons and daughters of servicemembers.

Chris Mullin, former U.S. Olympic player and NBA star, said working with these children was a pleasure. "Their parents are serving us. We're just trying to give a little back to them," he said. "The way they serve our country and protect us, what we're doing is very small. It's been my pleasure to be here, and I thank God for our troops."

David Robinson, former Olympic and NBA star and U.S. Naval Academy graduate, said the partnership is a phenomenal



Photos by USAF Staff Sgt. D. Myles Cullen

**Above: David Robinson, Gold Medal Olympian, tries to defend a lay-up by 11-year-old Taylor Livick, daughter of U.S. Army Lt. Col. Todd Livick, during the "Hoops For Troops" program at the Pentagon Athletic Center April 6.**

**Below: USA head coach Mike Krzyzewski (right) presents a USA Basketball jersey to Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Edmund P. Giambastiani Jr.**

opportunity.

"Our troops right now, especially as we see them potentially lay down their lives for our country, they're really the heroes," he said. "I think it's great for our players to understand what it means to serve. We get to serve the people who are serving us. It's a blessing."

Robinson said his favorite part of the day was getting to interact with servicemembers again.

"Being in the Navy, I've always had a great experience with military guys everywhere," he said to a group of sailors. "I always look forward to coming back and being able to serve you guys."

Robinson, Mullin, Krzyzewski and others went on camera to tell servicemembers overseas how much they appreciate the troops' hard work.

Melanie Boykin, 12, called the event "really cool" and said she was very excited. "I didn't expect to meet NBA players," she said.

Her father, Air Force Col. Al Boykin, said he was happy to see both his son and daughter interacting with the players and coaches. Boykin volunteers as a coach for both his kids' teams.

"We all love the game," he said. "It's probably just as exciting for me to see these big stars as it is for my kids."

